

TAJIRI! Ohtani! YAKUSHIJI! Jaguar Yokota! GREAT SASUKE! TAKA MOTHERF*CKING MICHINOKU! and other stuff I saw this week!

Howdy!

Welcome to DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #25! I gotta another tape from the kind and benevolent Glenn In Japan (the Mother Theresa of wrestling fans) and GOD did it rock! WOO-HOO!

-The coolest match on the tape was the Tajiri vs Ohtani at the Tokyo Dome show from last month. Tajiri is gonna be the shit, Bubba. Ohtani is already the shit (Bubba) and proved it by letting the indie guy get in all the good stuff- a selfless act that raises him to new heights in my eyes after all the shitty NJ bullying of the little guys for the rest of the matches, which made me want to go out and by all the tapes with Nakamaki just out of spite. Tajiri did these awesome shootstyle kicks and nigh-perfect suplexes and then he hit the most beautiful Asai moonsaults I've seen. I was REALLY impressed by this guy. He looked cool too. Kinda young and spunky... but a hint of surliness came to the surface.:) Ohtani tried to wrestle heelishly but his Cunninghamness kept creeping through.:) I agree with JDW when he said the ending wasn't done well. This could have REALLY been the show stopper and I suspect that NJ allowed all of this so they could get a shot at stealing Tajiri. Hell! I would! I'd give him cooler pants though. (In a semi-related, entirely-stupid note, the best pants of the night were the leather pants worn by the guy who seconded Nakamaki. They smoked those stupid things Chono wears like a cheap cigar. Nakamaki also looked cooler than Chono, because- HEY!- nobody dresses better than when they are going to Death Match. I think that was why Chono was so pissed. That was the only time I EVER liked Nakamaki.:))

-I watched TWO Michinoku Pro Champ Forums and they both Whipped my Ass with manly goodness (WHAT!?!). The first had a boss six-man match between Gran Naniwa/Yakushiji/ and that Quasi-BattlARTS guy Hoshikawa, I think, vs Shiryu/Dick Togo and Men's Teioh. Yakushiji has the dopiest mask in all of wrestledom currently- looking kinda like a green ant, which is kinda cool in a way. He came out accompanied by a strange entourage of dancers that were wearing nifty traditional (maybe) outfits, with Yak pulling up the rear, out of step. Very odd! Yakushiji is NOW a direct clone of Rey Misterio Jr. which is a good thing if he uses that to develop his own moves and until then, at least we get to see toprope leg scissors onto the floor and those cool spinning around the shoulders elaborate armdrags that Rey doesn't do in WCW ever. Naniwa has lost his mind and did a heckish released German Suplex that All-Japaned Dick Togo directly onto his neck. Naniwa is too young to be getting this good. Ever since the valley of his Sky-Diving J match, he has truly kicked it deeply into gear. My fave highspot was the triple tope by BattlARTS guy, Naniwa and Yakushiji with Naniwa going over the turnbuckle. (I think his name is) Hoshikawa is better than the last time I saw him (an undercard throwaway against Terry Boy last year) and seemed to be another cog in the wheel to getting away from a league of total highflyers. I see a decent feud against MEN'S this year because they worked together well- with MEN'S hitting his power arsenal and ITHNI Hoshikawa did all of his pseudo-shoot stuff and it was pretty stiff and neat. Of course, he may be the one they could

stick Funaki in with when they get tired of all these ten men deals. I'd like to see that too. Togo was the king as usual, but didn't have Hamada to really go wild on until the second Champ Forum. He sold all the Yakushiji Lucha armdrag stuff in both matches and cemented even more the fact that Togo is the Fuerza Guerrera in the body of Super Astro of Japan. YEP! THE SECOND MATCH between Kaientai Deluxe vs Sasuke's band of wusses was even better because Hamada, Sasuke and Funaki were in it. The SBOWs do the Wuss Beatdown of Funaki and he is carried off in dramatic fashion. Yakushiji is without his freakish mask so it lost a couple of points because I fear we will never see it again. Glenn noticed the same spots in both matches, which kinda glaring when you watch them right next to each other, but I think the main thing is that they are trying to get Yakushiji over by showing his best moves, which they do in both matches at the same time in both matches. Sasuke continues to look healthier and healthier, and looked best when in with Funaki, as they went all shootstyle on the proceedings and Sasuke did his Bruce Lee-Ali shuffle which I am the eternal sucker for. Hamada continues to resurge as this feud has brought it back to him and he is feeling it again. He and Togo are becoming a good rivalry and I hope it spills out into good singles matches between the two when the war breaks down into skirmishes. The second match on the tape is TAKA vs Super Delfin. this was real good- if not up to the level of the AWESOME Sky Diving J match. TAKA hits a springboard moonsault with the camera in perfect position to catch the total height of the jump and still stay real close up. I think I said, "DAMN!" when it happened.:) The first match on the first CF is Kendo vs Shiryu in kind of a throwaway, as it looked like Kendo hurt himself and they rushed to a finish and they didn't really do anything. Overall, a CHOICE batch of wrestling!

-TAKA vs Shinzaki. The words instill horror in the minds of everyone who fears big-name suckasses being put over actual wrestlers. Last year was bad with Juventud Guerrera being squashed by thoroughly useless piece of shit, Lex Luger, and this year has been worse with LaParka jobbing to holistic piece of shit, Ice Train. Now this. Luckily it wasn't so bad. It was REALLY not good, but at least TAKA made him work a little- with the absolute turd Shinzaki blowing up after one lucha sequence. TAKA being the insane deity that he is, answers all of our prayers by potatoing the fuck out of his royal crappiness before having to succumb to his lousy finisher sequence. TAKA also TAKAbombs him on a chair which was pretty choice, but not really enough to erase the smell of Shinzaki's wrestling skill. Shinzaki sucks green donkey lungs and should be a WAR undercard regular. He should definitely not be pissing off the worlds brightest young talent with his total lack of everything.

-I watched the Jd' Beauty Athlete II TV special and it was very embryonic. It wasn't as good as the GAEA stuff from this point in it's development. Bloody Phoenix and Chikako Shiratori are their prospects for the future and they tried to get them in a hot match against each other at the end, but they are still too green to be in with each other. More matches against Bison and Yokota would do them a world of good. The older gals matches were low impact like in GAEA, but with out the added drama and psychology. They seemed a little lacklustre, but I'm sure it will all pick up once the youngsters start getting more mat time under their belts and can put together good matches, thus, the elders will get a fire lit under them and have something to work with. Jd' has potential to be the next wrestling Lolita, but it will have a way to go to reach GAEA's Nobakovesque proportions.:) It's too early to tell, but their punks show a spark that could

ignite into something. This isn't the show to see it on though as they tend to lack confidence and seem tentative.

-I watch Mitsuhashi Misawa vs Tamon Honda and it was pretty good. Honda got in some good offense and the crowd started getting into it as Misawa was basically going through the motions at the beginning, but he started heating up the proceedings as Honda got a couple of nearfalls, which really started the crowd to chanting for the upset of upsets. If it had gone five more minutes and if the ending wasn't so anti-climatic I would have recommended it. It was real close. The Tag title switch was on the same show and it was kinda subpar I thought. That was the worst I've seen Steve Williams look. Kawada and Taue were relentless as one would suspect and Ace was his quietly great self as usual so it wasn't bad, but it wasn't as good as it could have been. Williams sells an arm injury that limits his Kawada-vertebrae-fusing ability WAY TOO MUCH for such an important match. I didn't like the psychology of the match because it got in the way of having a truly all out deadly suplexfest like it should have been. The pinnacle was the stoic beyond the realm of stoic victory interviews afterwards. It amounted to;

Interviewer: So, Kawada, is it exciting to have the belts back around you and your partners waists again? This has been a real surprise after all y'all have been through in the last 14 months.

Kawada: Yeah, what ever.

It's worth the price of admission for that alone.:)

-The Power Warrior vs Great Muta DID have the coolest headgear in wrestling ever- with the metallic helmet headcovering that Power Warrior had. Muta's was a lot like last years, so it didn't win the hippest article of clothing sweepstakes two years running. The match sucked but used a lot of tables, and the head gear was really neat. Did I mention the head gear?:)

-Nitro sucked again, though it was good to see Villano IV again. ALLRIGHT! Ice Train rules with that splash thing, boy. I'm glad he polished off that piker, LaParka. HEY! The NWO are gonna be involved with the Cruiserweights! COOL! WCW sucks dick.

NANIWA~!